

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1351

By Dunn

A RESOLUTION to express the sorrow of the General Assembly at the death of our colleague, Representative Jack Sharp.

WHEREAS, it was with great regret, deep sadness, and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly learned of the untimely passing of our most trusted and valued colleague, Representative Jack Sharp of East Ridge in Hamilton County; and

WHEREAS, Representative Sharp was a dedicated and proficient public servant who represented the good people of the 30th House District with the utmost acumen, probity, and integrity during his six terms in the House of Representatives (99th through 104th General Assemblies); and

WHEREAS, the very epitome of the humble Christian gentleman, Jack Sharp never sought the spotlight for himself, but rather worked quietly and effectively out of the glare of state and local politics to the great benefit of his constituents and indeed, the entire State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who had earned the universal respect of both his colleagues and all other people involved in the legislative process, Representative Sharp eschewed the gridlock of partisan politics and worked alongside members of both parties to make Tennessee a better place to live, work, and raise a family; and

WHEREAS, throughout all his endeavors in various arenas of public and private life, Jack Sharp was a man of integrity who said what he meant and stood by his convictions; and

WHEREAS, Representative Sharp worked assiduously to keep taxes low for all Tennesseans, exercise fiscal responsibility in State government, and create an environment conducive to bringing new and better jobs to his district and this State; and

WHEREAS, a vital contributor to the legislative process, Representative Sharp sponsored more than eighty bills and resolutions and co-sponsored more than six hundred bills and resolutions during his distinguished twelve-year tenure in the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, he was a strong proponent for meaningful welfare reform and a sponsor of the legislation that established the groundbreaking Families First program; and

WHEREAS, deeply committed to preserving our Second Amendment rights, Representative Sharp was a life member of the National Rifle Association and had received an A+ rating from that organization for his sterling legislative record; he passed legislation to streamline Tennessee's handgun laws and expedite the conceal and carry process; and

WHEREAS, believing strongly that families have an inherent right to feel safe and secure in their communities, Representative Sharp was an unapologetic advocate of tougher anti-crime measures, including increasing the amount of time that violent and repeat offenders must spend in prison, restoring the State's death penalty statute, and promoting victims' rights; and

WHEREAS, he also worked to make Tennessee's DUI laws among the toughest in the nation by decreasing the legal blood alcohol limit to .08 percent; he also sponsored legislation to substantially increase penalties for vehicular homicides committed by DUI offenders; and

WHEREAS, a legislator of many and various talents, Jack Sharp passed legislation to protect our collegiate student-athletes from unscrupulous sports agents and to honor the 40th President of the United States by designating his birthday, February 6, as "Ronald Reagan Day"; he also sponsored bills to bring logic and fairness to Tennessee's specialty license plate program and to provide discounts on driver licenses to organ donors; and

WHEREAS, Representative Sharp demonstrated his singular legislative abilities as a member of the House Agriculture Committee, the House Transportation Committee, and as Vice Chair of the House Public Transportation and Highways Subcommittee; he had been honored as the 1999 Legislator of the Year by the County Officials Association; and

WHEREAS, born February 21, 1936, in Knoxville, Representative Sharp received his education in the Knox County public schools, Maryville College, and Chattanooga State Community College; and

WHEREAS, a former Democrat who served with distinction as a Republican in the House of Representatives, Jack Sharp also enjoyed a productive tenure as the Mayor of East Ridge, in which capacity he helped the City make the transition to the council form of government; and

WHEREAS, a gentleman who truly held an abiding commitment to public service in its many forms, Representative Sharp served on the Board of Directors of East Ridge Hospital and Area Four Special Olympics; he was also a life member and Past Master of East Ridge Lodge No. 755 F&AM, the Chattanooga Scottish Rite, and the Alhambra Shrine; and

WHEREAS, a Korean War veteran who had proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps, Jack Sharp supported his fellow veterans with compassion and conviction as an active member of East Ridge American Legion Post No. 95; and

WHEREAS, Representative Sharp expressed his Christian faith through worship and service at Jones Memorial United Methodist Church; he enjoyed working with the youth of the church, because he understood the importance of grooming quality leaders for the future; and

WHEREAS, his many political and professional achievements aside, Jack Sharp was a loving husband and father, wonderful grandfather, and good and reliable friend; he is survived by his wife of forty-one years, Mary Ann Sharp; a son, Jackie Sherrill Sharp, Jr., and his wife, Pauline; three daughters, Brenda S. Stokes and her husband, Mal, Patricia S. Kays and her husband, Danny, and Michelle S. Rodgers and her husband, Jimmy; nine grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; two brothers, Nick Sharp and Odell Sharp; two sisters, Georgia Brown and Cressie Underwood; and several nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Jack Sharp was truly a man of the people; he was as friendly to and respectful of his constituents and legislative staff as he was of his colleagues, and his commitment to the health and prosperity of his fellow citizens was truly exemplary; and

WHEREAS, as we reflect upon Jack Sharp's passing, we are saddened by both the loss we have experienced personally and by the fact that Tennessee will be a poorer place without him, as he represented the epitome of the devoted public servant and family man; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor the memory of our colleague, Representative Jack Sharp, remembering his indelible legacy of astute public service and his unwavering commitment to his fellow human beings. He was a man whose whole life was distinguished by purpose and commitment and he will be sorely missed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our condolences to Representative Sharp's family and many friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.